UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/48/7/Add.5
8 February 1994

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Forty-eighth session
Agenda item 123

PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1994-1995

Addendum

Financing for the expansion of the United Nations Observer Mission in South Africa

Sixth report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the Secretary-General's report on financing for the expansion of the United Nations Observer Mission in South Africa (UNOMSA) dated 31 January 1994 (A/C.5/48/67). During the course of its consideration of the report, the Advisory Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information to the Committee.

2. The Advisory Committee recalls that UNOMSA was established in mid-September 1992 pursuant to Security Council resolution 772 (1992) with a total strength of 50 civilian observers and 13 support staff. In February and September 1993, the Security Council authorized increments of 10 and 40 observers respectively, for a total complement of 100 observers. As shown in table 2 of the Secretary-General's report (A/C.5/48/67), the current approved staffing table includes 116 international personnel and 60 local staff.

3. For the initial phase of the mission from mid-September to 30 November 1992, the Secretary-General had authorized commitments of up to $1,000,000 under General Assembly resolution 46/187 on unforeseen and extraordinary expenses. Subsequently, for the period mid-September 1992 to 31 December 1993, the General Assembly appropriated an amount of $13,044,900 under section 2 of the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993.

4. Following consideration of the Secretary-General's earlier report on the financing of UNOMSA, dated 18 November 1993 (A/C.5/48/28), the Advisory Committee in its report (A/48/745) recommended that the estimate of $8,994,100 for UNOMSA be approved for the period from 1 January to 31 July 1994, without prejudice to such decisions as the General Assembly might take on the mode of financing of UNOMSA. The General Assembly, in its resolution 48/230, endorsed the recommendations of the Advisory Committee.

5. Subsequently, the Secretary-General in his report on the question of South Africa (A/48/845 and Add.1-S/1994/16 and Add.1), inter alia, proposed an expanded mandate and size for UNOMSA. The Security Council, in resolution 894 (1994) of 14 January 1994:

> "having considered the request of the Transitional Executive Council that the United Nations provide a sufficient number of international observers to monitor the electoral process and to coordinate the activities of the international observers provided by the Organization of African Unity, the Commonwealth and the European Union as well as those provided by Governments (S/1994/16), and accepting the need to respond urgently to this request, [welcomed] with appreciation the report of the Secretary-General of 10 January 1994 and [agreed] with the proposals contained therein concerning the mandate and size of UNOMSA, including the proposals for the coordination of the activities of the international observers provided by the Organization of African Unity, the Commonwealth and the European Union as well as those provided by any other intergovernmental organizations or Governments".

6. On 21 January 1994, the General Assembly adopted resolution 48/233, which, inter alia, also welcomed the proposals contained in the Secretary-General's report. Those proposals are summarized in paragraph 8 of document A/C.5/48/67. In this connection, the Committee notes from paragraph 80 of the Secretary-General's report (A/48/845-S/1994/16) that UNOMSA will have two operating arms:

> "a Peace Promotion Division and an Electoral Division. The Peace Promotion Division will be headed by a D-2 reporting to the Deputy Special Representative. The work of the nine regional offices will be coordinated by that Division, and its teams will continue to follow rallies and other public events, investigate instances of intimidation and related complaints, continue to coordinate with the peace structures, and will expand its network of contacts to include the monitoring branch of the Independent Electoral Commission."

7. The Committee points out that, in view of the complexity of UNOMSA's task, the Secretary-General's report in document A/C.5/48/67 should have provided a clear explanation of the operational plan for UNOMSA. In this connection, the Committee believes that it would have been useful to include information in the document on the differing conditions in the mission area, especially with regard to infrastructure, communications and accommodation.

8. Pursuant to Security Council resolution 894 (1994), the Secretary-General, in his current report on the financing for the expansion of UNOMSA

(A/C.5/48/67), presents supplementary estimates indicating that an additional appropriation of $33,440,900 will be required under section 4 of the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 to cover the requirements of the expanded mandate and size of UNOMSA up to 31 July 1994.

9. The Advisory Committee was informed by the Controller that it is the Secretary-General's hope that the General Assembly will approve additional appropriations for the expanded mandate of UNOMSA. According to the Controller, this would permit assessments on Member States in accordance with Financial Regulation 5.2.

10. The Advisory Committee points out that, should the General Assembly decide that the expenses of UNOMSA should continue to be a charge on the regular budget, they will be met from the General Fund, which is financed from assessments that have been issued on an annual basis. In view of what is reflected in paragraph 9 above, a decision may need to be made on an exceptional basis with respect to the timing of additional assessments, taking into account the cash-flow situation. However, if the budget of UNOMSA is financed from a special account on the basis of the scale for peace-keeping operations, then, in keeping with current practice, an immediate assessment will be levied on Member States.

11. In paragraphs 29 to 33 of his report under consideration (A/C.5/48/67), the Secretary-General outlines the reasons for the action he believes would be required to be taken by the General Assembly in connection with the financing for the expanded mandate and size of UNOMSA. The Advisory Committee recalls that, in paragraph 14 of its resolution 44/137, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General:

> "to establish, in accordance with United Nations financial regulations, a voluntary trust fund for cases where the requesting Member State is unable to finance, in whole or in part, the electoral verification mission and to propose guidelines for disbursements therefrom".

The Advisory Committee believes that there is a need for further policy clarification in this regard.

12. As outlined in annex I to the report, the Secretary General's estimate for personnel costs for the Mission for the period from 1 January to 31 July 1994 amounts to $24,662,600, comprising international personnel ($14,019,100), general temporary assistance ($1,152,800), consultants ($100,000), travel on official business ($95,500) and volunteers and observers ($9,295,200).

13. Included in the amount of $14,019,100 for personnel costs, is an amount of $5,867,100 for the salaries of 311 additional international staff (232 Professional, 50 General Service, 22 Field Service, 7 Security Service). The Advisory Committee was not able to obtain definitive information on how many of the 311 additional staff would be from the United Nations Secretariat. The Advisory Committee points out, however, that on the basis of past experience the number is likely to be significant. Moreover, Professional posts whose incumbents are sent to UNOMSA will not be easily filled with replacements, given the lengthy recruitment procedures for the Professional category and the short

duration of the Mission (six months). As for the General Service staff, the Advisory Committee is not convinced that their replacement will be necessary for the duration of the Mission.

14. In any case, the Advisory Committee points out that the costs of any replacements can probably be absorbed since the latest available information indicates a vacancy rate for the Professional category at 7.4 per cent, against a budgeted rate of 6 per cent, and 1.5 per cent for the General Service category, against a budgeted rate of 0.8 per cent.

15. An amount of $4,560,100 has been budgeted for common staff costs, including travel to and from the mission area, of which $2.5 million relates to common staff costs. The Advisory Committee understands that common staff costs estimates have been based on New York standard rates; there is therefore a possibility for savings depending upon the actual composition of the staff and the fact that short-term recruits may not be eligible for all of the benefits that comprise the common staff costs package.

16. An amount of $3,591,900 is estimated for mission subsistence allowance. The Advisory Committee understands that the daily rates used as the basis for this estimate do not take into account the different cost-of-living adjustments that might apply in urban and rural areas. The Advisory Committee is of the opinion that more than one subsistence allowance calculation should be taken into consideration.

17. Apart from the comments the Advisory Committee has made in the foregoing paragraphs with regard to the calculation of the costs of the 311 proposed additional international staff, the Committee also expresses its concern at the high level of many of the additional Professional posts being proposed and the large number of General Service staff proposed to be recruited internationally. In this connection, the Advisory Committee believes that the additional international General Service staff should not exceed the 20 who are to be provided from within existing United Nations staff resources; the remainder should be recruited locally. With regard to the 7 security staff (see para. 13 above), the Advisory Committee understands that they will be provided from existing United Nations staff and that they will not be replaced during the mission period.

18. The Secretary-General estimates a requirement of $9,295,200 for volunteers and observers for the mission. This would include the costs of 200 United Nations Volunteers (UNVs) for a period of 2 months and 1,288 electoral observers, including travel and subsistence for the observers, for a 10-day period during the elections. The Advisory Committee believes that travel costs for observers may be overstated both with regard to the number of travel days estimated and the level of the allowances.

19. The Advisory Committee also believes that, given the fact that there will be a large number of other personnel in the mission area involved in similar activities, the duration of the services of UNVs and/or other staff performing similar functions could be decreased, with a consequent reduction in the financial requirement. The Committee was provided with information that indicates that the United Nations was establishing an all-inclusive monthly duty

allowance payable to all UNV specialists regardless of the location of their duty stations in South Africa. The Advisory Committee understands that the establishment of this allowance increases the costs of UNVs, although the use of UNVs would still be cost-effective compared to other United Nations and international personnel. The Advisory Committee has consistently encouraged the use of volunteers. However, the increased costs of UNVs are of concern to the Committee, and it intends to revert to this issue for a more detailed review and consideration of the use and cost of UNVs.

20. Operational costs amount to $8,778,300, including rental and maintenance of premises ($158,500), vehicle operation ($4,044,500), rental of aircraft ($1,227,700), commercial communications ($505,700), acquisition of communications equipment ($1,124,300), miscellaneous services ($115,000), freight and related charges ($220,000), public information services ($300,000), supplies and materials ($157,900) and office furniture and equipment ($926,700).

21. From the information provided, the Advisory Committee believes that maximum efforts should be made to encourage the host Government to provide financial and material support for UNOMSA. For example, the authorities could be requested to provide assistance with respect to communications and communications equipment, premises, public information activities and even personnel such as drivers. The Advisory Committee requests that the possibility of renting some of the communications equipment be explored. With regard to premises, the Advisory Committee recalls from paragraph 9 of its last report on UNOMSA (A/48/745) that negotiations were under way to obtain premises at reasonable cost. The Committee understands that these negotiations are still in progress. The Committee reiterates its expectation that every effort will be made to seek the Government's assistance in procuring office space with minimum charge to the United Nations.

22. It was unclear to the Advisory Committee the extent to which the other international and regional organizations being coordinated by the United Nations could be expected to share some of the costs of transportation and related items. Every effort should be made to ensure that each of the participating organizations bears its own expenses. An attempt should also be made to explore the possibility of borrowing data-processing and office equipment from other United Nations missions in view of the short duration of the mission.

23. The Advisory Committee believes that the requirements for the number of vehicles as indicated in the report, especially with regard to the ratio of vehicles to staff, are high. The Committee also believes that the estimated rental costs are exorbitant. In any case, the Advisory Committee trusts that every effort will be made to negotiate rental contracts on favourable terms to the United Nations. The Committee expects that existing regulations with regard to the private use of United Nations vehicles will be strictly enforced.

24. The Advisory Committee was informed that the Trust Fund established for financing the participation of observers from African and developing countries had not received any contributions; however, a meeting with donors was scheduled for 7 February 1994. The Advisory Committee trusts that contributions will be forthcoming from donors. In the same vein, the Advisory Committee was further informed that, in view of the cash-flow situation of the United Nations, the

Secretary-General would welcome any type of financial support in voluntary contributions and cash advances to provide short-term financing of the costs of the Mission.

25. In view of its observations and comments in paragraphs 13 to 19 and 21 to 23 above, the Committee recommends that an amount of $30,040,900 be approved for the expansion of UNOMSA for the period 1 January to 31 July 1994.